

Giant cable companies should not be permitted to grow larger. Further consolidation in the cable industry is a clear violation of horizontal ownership rules that must be re-established to serve the public interest. We don't want another gilded age on our hands with a monopoly on essential resources, in this case, the ever important resource of today - technological communication. If these large companies continue to grow unhindered, they'll crush all competitors, essentially reducing America to communism. That's not what I want. I want a fair market. I want legitimate corporate competition. Not just continued support of overloaded, already huge corporations.

The concentration of power and control over distribution of media is a growing problem in this country. Though we have more channels available than ever before, they are under the operation of a handful of giant corporations.

If Comcast and Time Warner are allowed to merge with Adelphia, the two companies will control nearly 50 percent of the national market. This level of concentration in the cable industry will lead to higher consumer rates and lower quality service.

Since passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the “deregulation” of cable, consumers have seen their rates jump an average of 59 percent — with some areas experiencing

even more dramatic increases.

We are required to buy channels we don't want or need because the cable operators bundle them together. The quality of customer service often reflects the fact that cable television is not a competitive market.

Meanwhile, the cost of cable modem service remains out of reach for many households, holding constant for years and selectively underserving rural and low-income Americans. The American people are watching the digital divide widen even as the need for access to high-speed networks increases.

This lack of existing competition has only caused the companies make less and less effort to fulfill the

consumers needs and desires, because they no longer have to in order to stay in control of the market. This is wrong, and should not stand.

Cable companies have become less responsive to the needs and requirements of communities. The quality of public accountability in local franchise agreements has declined, as big companies leverage their power to squeeze local governments.

In many communities, the truly independent sources of local news, information and culture come from the public channels produced at the local access centers.

Unfortunately, local channels lack the resources to produce the programming that

citizens want and need. Our own community radio, WMPG, is only alive because it's supported by a college, and that's still not enough to provide dedicated station programming, all of the broadcasting is dependent on independent DJs and such. This is disturbing. It should NOT be this difficult to be able to broadcast or make a difference in the communications world, but with corporate giants taking over, that's what's happening. The people are completely isolated from the communications world! It's disgusting, and it needs to stop!

The last thing we need is to reward the anti-competitive actions of cable giants by permitting greater

consolidation in  
ownership, reducing  
competition, and  
encouraging more of  
the same.